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The Wisdom of Ralph Waldo Emerson

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The Wisdom of Ralph Waldo Emerson

BEING EXTRACTS FROM HIS PROSE AND VERSE

SELECTED AND ARRANGED, WITH INTRODUCTION

BY

WILLIAM B. PARKER

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INTRODUCTION

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WHO does not remember the day in his youth when the page of Emerson was opened to him! It should have been a morning in his sixteenth year, on his first visit to New England, in the crisp autumn with a touch of frost in the air. The questions that rise in the mind of the boy have been in ferment: his early sense of life, fate, the eternal issues, are vaguely astir. Coming into the room of a friend at school he finds the book lying on the table, idly opens it, and his eye falls on the line "Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string." His own heart strings tighten; he turns back to the first page and finds the stern but tonic lines:

"Cast the bantling on the rocks,
Suckle him with the she-wolf's teat,
Wintered with the hawk and fox,
Power and speed be hands and feet."

The frosty, biting air of the book stirs him strongly. He reads on page after page, his pulse quickened to the strenuous

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note, his eyes widened to the larger spaces. The boldness of the writer, his audacious self-confidence kindle a new spirit in the youth, and he lays down the book with the words,

"I am master of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Caesar's hand and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart and Shakespeare's strain,"

like one who has been admitted to a new order of heroes.

No American writer lends himself so readily to quotation as Emerson. This is partly a tribute to his supremacy, for quotation is the test of success in a writer; it is partly a consequence of his style. He wrote in epigrams, apothegms, paragraphs, which often recall in form as well as substance, the sententious sayings of the moralists of other lands and other times—Confucius, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, Montaigne. These are the minds with which

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Emerson is naturally associated; to these he was spiritually akin. Of Montaigne's essays he said, "It seems to me as if I had myself written the book in some former life," and it will appear to a student that his relation to Seneca was no less close. He resembled all the seers and moralists in having no formal scheme of philosophy. As he wrote himself, "I could not give an account of myself if challenged. . . . I delight in telling what I think; but if you ask me how I dare say so, or why it is so, I am the most helpless of mortal men." This again adds to the quotability of his work and makes it particularly suitable for presentation in the form followed here.

So perennially true are Emerson's words, and so applicable to the changing events of every day, that it is difficult to realize that he was born over a century ago, under conditions vastly different from those of this decade. His father was a minister of the First Church, Boston, and most of his ancestors for six generations had been ministers and scholars. He followed in their foot-

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steps, attended the Latin school, went to Harvard, then to the divinity school, and was ordained to preach in 1829. At this point his path parted from that pursued by his ministerial ancestors. Three years later he resigned his pastorate and for the rest of his life devoted himself to literature. Like all our earlier American authors, Emerson found writing a very precarious means of livelihood. Of his first book "Nature," it took twelve years to sell five hundred copies in this country. Though he was never in such straits as Hawthorne, and also Lowell went through, he needed to practise extreme frugality, and even with his income from lecturing, his earnings as a writer would not have supported him without his modest inheritance. He wrote to Carlyle in 1838 that he had $22,000 invested and could earn $800 a year by lecturing. It was not a very opulent living, and justified the additional remark that he had "not a dollar to spend on a fancy."

Emerson resembled Wordsworth in his earnest opposition to materialism, echoing

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his message "The world is too much with us"—yet he had little of Wordsworth's impractical passivity of spirit. In his customary attitude toward life Emerson's vigorous Americanism made him more akin to Carlyle, with whom he had a closer and longer friendship than with any other man of letters, English or American. In a sense these two were allies in the war upon materialism, which both waged throughout their lives, to the immeasurable advantage of both countries. More serene and lofty of spirit than Carlyle, Emerson was able to serve his time supremely well. No country had ever plunged more wholeheartedly into the quest for wealth than this—and none has been blest in recent times with so tonic and corrective a spirit.

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MAN

Go where he will, the wise man is at home,
His hearth the earth—his hall the azure dome;
Where his clear spirit leads him, there's his road,
By God's own light illumined and foreshowed.

Woodnotes.

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The Worth of a Man

A MAN passes for that he is worth. Very idle is all curiosity concerning other people's estimate of us, and idle is all fear of remaining unknown. If a man know that he can do any thing—that he can do it better than any one else—he has a pledge of the acknowledgment of that fact by all persons. The world is full of judgment-days, and into every assembly that a man enters, in every action he attempts he is gauged and stamped.

Spiritual Laws.

Man's Goods

WHAT a man does, that he has. What has he to do with hope or fear? In himself is his might. Let him regard no good as solid but that which is in his nature, and which must grow out of him as long as he exists. The goods of fortune may come and go like summer leaves; let him play with them, and scatter them on every wind, as the momentary signs of his infinite productiveness.

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Man's Own Comes to Him

IT is vain to attempt to keep a secret from one who has a right to know it. It will tell itself. That mood into which a friend can bring us is his dominion over us. To the thoughts of that state of mind he has a right. All the secrets of that state of mind he can compel. This is a law which statesmen use in practice. All the terrors of the French Republic, which held Austria in awe, were unable to command her diplomacy. But Napoleon sent to Vienna M. de Narbonne, one of the old noblesse, with the morals, manners, and name of that interest, saying that it was indispensable to send to the old aristocracy of Europe men of the same connexion, which, in fact, constitutes a sort of freemasonry. M. Narbonne in less than a fortnight penetrated all the secrets of the Imperial Cabinet.

Spiritual Laws.

His Nature

A MAN is a method, a progressive arrangement; a selecting principle, gathering his like to him, wherever he goes. He takes only his own, out of the multiplicity that

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sweeps and circles round him. He is like one of those booms which are set out from the shore on rivers to catch drift-wood, or like the loadstone amongst splinters of steel.

His Nature

Those facts, words, persons, which dwell in his memory without his being able to say why, remain, because they have a relation to him not less real for being as yet unapprehended. What attracts my attention shall have it; as I will go to the man who knocks at my door, whilst a thousand persons, as worthy, go by it, to whom I give no regard. It is enough that these particulars speak to me. A few anecdotes, a few traits of character, manners, face, a few incidents, have an emphasis in your memory out of all proportion to their apparent significance, if you measure them by the ordinary standards. They relate to your gift. Let them have their weight, and do not reject them, and cast about for illustration and facts more usual in literature. Respect them, for they have their origin in deepest nature. What your heart

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thinks great, is great. The soul's emphasis is always right. *Spiritual Laws.*

Learning

NO man can learn what he has not preparation for learning, however near to his eyes is the object. A chemist may tell his most precious secrets to a carpenter, and he shall be never the wiser—the secrets he would not utter to a chemist for an estate. God screens us evermore from premature ideas. Our eyes are holden that we cannot see things that stare us in the face, until the hour arrives when the mind is ripened—then we behold them, and the time when we saw them not is like a dream.

Vocations

EACH man has his own vocation. The talent is the call. There is one direction in which all space is open to him. He has faculties silently inviting him thither to endless exertion. He is like a ship in a river; he runs against obstructions on every side but one; on that side, all obstruction is taken away, and he sweeps serenely

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over God's depths into an infinite sea. This talent and this call depend on his organisation, or the mode in which the general soul incarnates itself in him. He inclines to do something which is easy to him, and good when it is done, but which no other man can do. He has no rival. For the more truly he consults his own powers, the more difference will his work exhibit from the work of any other. When he is true and faithful, his ambition is exactly proportioned to his powers. The height of the pinnacle is determined by the breadth of the base. Every man has this call of the power to do somewhat unique, and no man has any other call. The pretence that he has another call, a summons by name and personal election and outward 'signs that mark him extraordinary, and not in the roll of common men,' is fanaticism, and betrays obtuseness to perceive that there is one mind in all the individuals, and no respect of persons therein. *Spiritual Laws.*

Vocations

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Development

BY doing his work, he makes the need felt which he can supply. He creates the taste by which he is enjoyed. He provokes the wants to which he can minister. By doing his own work, he unfolds himself. It is the vice of our public speaking, that it has not abandonment. Somewhere, not only every orator, but every man, should let out all the length of all the reins; should find or make a frank and hearty expression of what force and meaning is in him. The common experience is, that the man fits himself as well as he can to the customary details of that work or trade he falls into, and tends it as a dog turns a spit. Then is he a part of the machine he moves; the man is lost. Until he can manage to communicate himself to others in his full stature and proportion as a wise and good man, he does not yet find his vocation. He must find in that an outlet for his character, so that he may justify himself to their eyes for doing what he does. If the labour is trivial, let him by his thinking and character make it liberal. Whatever he knows and

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thinks, whatever in his apprehension is worth doing, that let him communicate, or men will never know and honour him aright. Foolish, whenever you take the meanness and formality of that thing you do, instead of converting it into the obedient spiracle of your character and aims.

Spiritual Laws.

Possibilities

THERE are no fixtures to men, if we appeal to consciousness. Every man supposes himself not to be fully understood; and if there is any truth in him, if he rests at last on the divine soul, I see not how it can be otherwise. The last chamber, the last closet, he must feel, was never opened; there is always a residuum unknown, unanalysable. That is, every man believes that he has a greater possibility.

Moods

OUR moods do not believe in each other. To-day I am full of thoughts, and can write what I please. I see no reason why I should not have the same thought, the same

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power of expression to-morrow. What I write, whilst I write it, seems the most natural thing in the world: but yesterday I saw a dreary vacuity in this direction in which now I see so much; and a month hence, I doubt not, I shall wonder who he was that wrote so many continuous pages. Alas for this infirm faith, this will not strenuous, this vast ebb of a vast flow!. I am God in nature; I am a weed by the wall.

Circles.

Limitations

HOW often must we learn this lesson? Men cease to interest us when we find their limitation. The only sin is limitation. As soon as you once come up with a man's limitations, it is all over with him. Has he talents? has he enterprises? has he knowledge? it boots not. Infinitely alluring and attractive was he to you yesterday, a great hope, a sea to swim in; now you have found his shores, found it a pond, and you care not if you never see it again. *Circles.*

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Man's World

TO the poet, to the philosopher, to the saint, all things are friendly and sacred, all events profitable, all days holy, all men divine. For the eye is fastened on the life, and slights the circumstance. Every chemical substance, every plant, every animal in its growth, teaches the unity of cause, the variety of appearance.

History.

GREAT men, or men of great gifts, you shall easily find, but symmetrical men never.

Representative Men.

Strength of Goodness

ALWAYS as much virtue as there is, so much appears; as much goodness as there is, so much reverence it commands. All the devils respect virtue. The high, the generous, the self-devoted sect will always instruct and command mankind. Never a sincere word was utterly lost. Never a magnanimity fell to the ground. Always the heart of man greets and accepts it unexpectedly. A man passes for that he is worth. What he is, engraves

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itself on his face, on his form, on his fortunes, in letters of light, which all men may read but himself. Concealment avails him nothing; boasting, nothing. There is confession in the glances of our eyes, in our smiles, in salutations, and the grasp of hands. His sin bedaubs him, mars all his good impression. Men know not why they do not trust him; but they do not trust him. His vice glasses his eye, demeans his cheek, pinches the nose, sets the mark of the beast on the back of the head, and writes, O fool! fool! on the forehead of a king. *Spiritual Laws.*

Cheating One's self

BUT it is as impossible for a man to be cheated by any one but himself, as for a thing to be and not to be at the same time. There is a third silent party to all our bargains. The nature and soul of things takes on itself the guaranty of the fulfilment of every contract, so that honest service cannot come to loss. If you serve an ungrateful master, serve him the more.

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Put God in your debt. Every stroke shall be repaid. The longer the payment is withholden, the better for you; for compound interest on compound interest is the rate and usage of this exchequer.

Compensation.

Persecution

THE history of persecution is a history of endeavours to cheat nature, to make water run uphill, to twist a rope of sand. It makes no difference whether the actors be many or one, a tyrant or a mob. The inviolate spirit turns their spite against the wrong-doers. The martyr cannot be dishonoured. Every lash inflicted is a tongue of fame; every prison a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverberates through the earth from side to side. The minds of men are at last aroused; reason looks out and justifies her own, and malice finds all her work vain. It is the whipper who is whipped, and the tyrant who is undone.

Compensation.

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Independence

HOW is a boy the master of society! Independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is, as it were, clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with éclat, he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutral, godlike independence! *Self Reliance.*

Pride of Opinion

ALTOGETHER independent of the intellectual force in each is the pride of opinion, the security that we are right. Not the feeblest grandame, not a mowing

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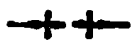
idiot, but uses what spark of perception and faculty is left, to chuckle and triumph in his or her opinion over the absurdities of all the rest. *Representative Men.*



Need of Contrast

WE fancy men are individuals; so are pumpkins; but every pumpkin in the field goes through every point of pumpkin history. The rabid democrat, as soon as he is senator and rich man, has ripened beyond possibility of sincere radicalism, and unless he can resist the sun, he must be conservative the remainder of his days. Lord Eldon said in his old age, 'that if he were to begin life again, he would be damned but he would begin as agitator.'

We hide this universality, if we can, but it appears at all points. We are as ungrateful as children. There is nothing we cherish and strive to draw to us, but in some hour we turn and rend it. We keep a running fire of sarcasm at ignorance and the life of the senses; then goes by, perchance, a fair girl, a piece of life, gay and

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happy, and making the commonest offices beautiful, by the energy and heart with which she does them, and seeing this, we admire and love her and them, and say, 'Lo! a genuine creature of the fair earth, not dissipated, or too early ripened by books, philosophy, religion, society, or care!' insinuating a treachery and contempt for all we had so long loved and wrought in ourselves and others.

No fixed Rule Binds

IF we could have any security against moods! If the profoundest prophet could be holden to his words, and the hearer who is ready to sell all and join the crusade, could have any certificate that to-morrow his prophet shall not unsay his testimony! But the truth sits veiled there on the bench, and never interposes an adamantine syllable; and the most sincere and revolutionary doctrine, put as if the ark of God were carried forward some furlongs, and planted there for the succour of the world, shall in a few weeks be coldly set aside by the

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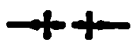
same speaker, as morbid; 'I thought I was right, but I was not'—and the same immeasurable credulity demanded for new audacities. If we were not of all opinions! if we did not in any moment shift the platform on which we stand, and look and speak from another! if there could be any regulation, any 'one-hour-rule,' that a man should never leave his point of view, without sound of trumpet! I am always insincere, as always knowing there are other moods.



Man Believes by Nature

WE are natural believers. Truth, or the connection between cause and effect, alone interests us. We are persuaded that a thread runs through all things: all worlds are strung on it, as beads: and men, and events, and life, come to us, only because of that thread: they pass and repass, only that we may know the direction and continuity of that line. A book or statement which goes to show that there is no line, but random and chaos, a calamity out of nothing, a prosperity and no

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account of it, a hero born from a fool, a fool from a hero—dispirits us. Seen or unseen, we believe the tie exists. Talent makes counterfeit ties; genius finds the real ones.

Representative Men.

Skepticism

SKEPTICISM is the attitude assumed by the student in relation to the particulars which society adores, but which he sees to be reverent only in their tendency and spirit. The ground occupied by the skeptic is the vestibule of the temple.

Representative Men.

Blindness to Defects

NATURE never spares the opium or nepenthe; but wherever she mars her creature with some deformity or defect, lays her poppies plentifully on the bruise, and the sufferer goes joyfully through life, ignorant of the ruin, and incapable of seeing it, though all the world point their finger at it every day. The worthless and offensive members of society, whose existence is a

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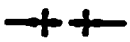
social pest, invariably think themselves the most ill-used people alive, and never get over their astonishment at the ingratitude and selfishness of their contemporaries.

Representative Men.

No One is Sane

BUT the craft with which the world is made, runs also into the mind and character of men. No man is quite sane; each has a vein of folly in his composition, a slight determination of blood to the head, to make sure of holding him hard to some one point which nature had taken to heart. Great causes are never tried on their merits; but the cause is reduced to particulars to suit the size of the partisans, and the contention is ever hottest on minor matters. Not less remarkable is the overfaith of each man in the importance of what he has to do or say.



The Poet and the Prophet

THE poet, the prophet, has a higher value for what he utters than any hearer, and therefore it gets spoken. The

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strong, self-complacent Luther declares with an emphasis, not to be mistaken, that 'God Himself cannot do without wise men.' Jacob Behmen and George Fox betray their egotism in the pertinacity of their controversial tracts, and James Naylor once suffered himself to be worshipped as the Christ. Each prophet comes presently to identify himself with his thought, and to esteem his hat and shoes sacred. However this may discredit such persons with the judicious, it helps them with the people, as it gives heat, pungency, and publicity to their words. A similar experience is not infrequent in private life.

The Youthful Diary

EACH young and ardent person writes a diary, in which, when the hours of prayer and penitence arrive, he inscribes his soul. The pages thus written are, to him, burning and fragrant: he reads them on his knees by midnight and by the morning star: he wets them with his tears: they are sacred; too good for the world, and hardly yet to be shown to the dearest friend. This is the

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man-child that is born to the soul, and her life still circulates in the babe. The umbilical cord has not yet been cut. After some time has elapsed, he begins to wish to admit his friend to this hallowed experience, and with hesitation, yet with firmness, exposes the pages to his eye. Will they not burn his eyes?

Others Are Not Deceived

THE friend coldly turns them over, and passes from the writing to conversation, with easy transition, which strikes the other party with astonishment and vexation. He cannot suspect the writing itself. Days and nights of fervid life, of communion with angels of darkness and of light, have engraved their shadowy characters on that tear-stained book. He suspects the intelligence or the heart of his friend. Is there then no friend?

Blind for Our Own Good

HE cannot yet credit that one may have impressive experience, and yet may not know how to put his private fact into literature; and perhaps the discovery that wisdom

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Blind for Our Own Good

has other tongues and ministers than we, that though we should hold our peace, the truth would not the less be spoken, might check injuriously the flames of our zeal. A man can only speak, so long as he does not feel his speech to be partial and inadequate. It is partial, but he does not see it to be so whilst he utters it. As soon as he is released from the instinctive and particular, and sees its partiality, he shuts his mouth in disgust. For, no man can write any thing, who does not think that what he writes is for the time, the history of the world; or do any thing well, who does not esteem his work to be of importance. My work may be of none, but I must not think it of none, or I shall not do it with impunity.

Nature.

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FRIENDSHIP

A ruddy drop of Manly blood
The surging sea outweighs,
The world uncertain comes and goes;
The lover rooted stays.

Friendship.

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MY friends have come to me unsought. The great God gave them to me. By oldest right, by the divine affinity of virtue with itself, I find them, or rather, not I, but the Deity in me and in them, both deride and cancel the thick walls of individual character, relation, age, sex, and circumstance, at which he usually connives, and now makes many one. High thanks I owe you, excellent lovers, who carry out the world for me to new and noble depths, and enlarge the meaning of all my thoughts.

Friendship.

Friendship Eternal

THERE are two elements that go to the composition of friendship, each so sovereign, that I can detect no superiority in either, no reason why either should be first named. One is Truth. A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him I may think aloud. I am arrived at last in the presence of a man so real and equal, that I may drop even those undermost garments of dissimulation, courtesy, and second thought, which men never put

Truth

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off, and may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another. Sincerity is the luxury allowed, like diadems and authority, only to the highest rank, *that* being permitted to speak truth, as having none above it to court or conform unto. Every man alone is sincere. At the entrance of a second person, hypocrisy begins. We parry and fend the approach of our fellow man by compliments, by gossip, by amusements, by affairs. We cover up our thought from him under a hundred folds.

Sincerity

I KNEW a man who, under a certain religious frenzy, cast off this drapery, and, omitting all compliment and commonplace, spoke to the conscience of every person he encountered, and that with great insight and beauty. At first he was resisted, and all men agreed he was mad. But persisting, as indeed he could not help doing, for some time in this course, he attained to the advantage of bringing every man of his acquaintance into true relations with him. No man would think of

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speaking falsely with him, or of putting him off with any chat of markets or reading-rooms. But every man was constrained by so much sincerity to face him, and what love of nature, what poetry, what symbol of truth he had, he did certainly shew him. But to most of us society shews not its face and eye, but its side and its back. To stand in true relations with men in a false age is worth a fit of insanity, is it not? We can seldom go erect. Almost every man we meet requires some civility, requires to be humoured; he has some fame, some talent, some whim of religion or philanthropy in his head that is not to be questioned, and so spoils all conversation with him.

Friendship.

Tenderness

THE other element of friendship is Tenderness. We are holden to men by every sort of tie, by blood, by pride, by fear, by hope, by lucre, by lust, by hate, by admiration, by every circumstance and badge and trifle, but we can scarce believe that so much character can subsist in another as to draw us

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by love. Can another be so blessed, and we so pure, that we can offer him tenderness? When a man becomes dear to me, I have touched the goal of fortune. *Friendship.*

Kindliness

WE have a great deal more kindness than is ever spoken. Maugre all the selfishness that chills like east winds the world, the whole human family is bathed with an element of love like a fine ether. How many persons we meet in houses, whom we scarcely speak to, whom yet we honour, and who honour us! How many we see in the street, or sit with in church, whom, though silently, we warmly rejoice to be with! Read the language of these wandering eye-beams. The heart knoweth.

Friendship.

Sacredness of Friendship

I HATE the prostitution of the name of friendship to signify modish and worldly alliances. I much prefer the company of plough-boys and tin-pedlars to the silken and perfumed amity which only celebrates its days of encounter by a frivolous display, by rides in a curricle, and dinners at the best

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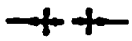
taverns. The end of friendship is a commerce the most strict and homely that can be joined; more strict than any of which we have experience. It is for aid and comfort through all the relations and passages of life and death. It is fit for serene days, and graceful gifts, and country rambles, but also for rough roads and hard fare, shipwreck, poverty, and persecution. It keeps company with the sallies of the wit and the trances of religion. We are to dignify to each other the daily needs and offices of man's life, and embellish it by courage, wisdom, and unity. It should never fall into something usual and settled, but should be alert and inventive, and add rhyme and reason to what was drudgery.

Friendship.



Contemporaries

WE learn of our contemporaries what they know, without effort, and almost through the pores of the skin. We catch it by sympathy, or, as a wife arrives at the intellectual and moral elevations of her husband. But we stop where they stop. Very hardly can we take another step. The great, or such

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as hold of nature, and transcend fashions, by their fidelity to universal ideas, are saviors from these federal errors, and defend us from our contemporaries. They are the exceptions which we want, where all grows alike.

Representative Men.

Opportunities for Friendship

WISDOM will never let us stand with any man or men on an unfriendly footing. We refuse sympathy and intimacy with people, as if we waited for some better sympathy and intimacy to come. But whence and when? To-morrow will be like to-day. Life wastes itself whilst we are preparing to live. Our friends and fellow-workers die off from us. Scarcely can we say, we see new men, new women approaching us. We are too old to regard fashion, too old to expect patronage of any greater or more powerful. Let us suck the sweetness of those affections and consuetudes that grow near us. These old shoes are easy to the feet. Undoubtedly, we can easily pick faults in our company, can easily whisper names prouder, and that tickle the fancy more. Every man's imagination hath its

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friends; and pleasant would life be with such companions. But if you cannot have them on good mutual terms, you cannot have them.

Prudence.

Companionship

HE shall have his own society. We can love nothing but nature. The most wonderful talents, the most meritorious exertions really avail very little with us; but nearness or likeness of nature—how beautiful is the ease of its victory! Persons approach us famous for their beauty, for their accomplishments, worthy of all wonder for their charms and gifts: they dedicate their whole skill to the hour and the company, with very imperfect result. To be sure, it would be very ungrateful in us not to praise them very loudly. Then, when all is done, a person of related mind, a brother or sister by nature, comes to us so softly and easily, so nearly and intimately, as if it were the blood in our proper veins, that we feel as if some one was gone, instead of another having come: we are utterly relieved and refreshed: it is a sort of joyful solitude.

Spiritual Laws.

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Mutual Understanding

I KNOW nothing which life has to offer so satisfying as the profound good understanding, which can subsist, after much exchange of good offices, between two virtuous men, each of whom is sure of himself, and sure of his friend. It is a happiness which postpones all other gratifications, and makes politics, and commerce, and churches cheap. For, when men shall meet as they ought, each a benefactor, a shower of stars, clothed with thoughts, with deeds, with accomplishments, it should be the festival of nature which all things announce. Of such friendship, love in the sexes is the first symbol, as all other things are symbols of love. Those relations to the best men, which, at one time, we reckoned the romances of youth, become, in the progress of the character, the most solid enjoyment. *Character.*

Intercourse

I DO, then, with my friends as I do with my books. I would have them where I can find them, but I seldom use them. We must have society on our own terms, and admit or exclude it on the slightest

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cause. Then, though I prize my friends, I cannot afford to talk with them and study their visions, lest I lose my own. It is true, next week I shall have languid times, when I can well afford to occupy myself with foreign objects; then I shall regret the lost literature of your mind, and wish you were by my side again. But if you come, perhaps you will fill my mind only with new visions, not with yourself, but with your lustres, and I shall not be able any more than now to converse with you. So I will owe to my friends this evanescent intercourse. I will receive from them not what they have, but what they are. They shall give me that which properly they cannot give me, but which radiates from them. But they shall not hold me by any relations less subtle and pure. We will meet as though we met not, and part as though we parted not. *Prudence.*

High Ideals

THE higher the style we demand of friendship, of course the less easy to establish it with flesh and blood. We walk

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Seek Worthy Friends

alone in the world. Friends such as we desire are dreams and fables. But a sublime hope cheers ever the faithful heart, that elsewhere, in other regions of the universal power, souls are now acting, enduring, and daring, which can love us, and which we can love. We may congratulate ourselves that the period of nonage, of follies, of blunders, and of shame, is passed in solitude, and when we are finished men, we shall grasp herioc hands in heroic hands. Only be admonished by what you already see, not to strike leagues of friendship with cheap persons, where no friendship can be. Our impatience betrays us into rash and foolish alliances, which no God attends. By persisting in your path, though you forfeit the little; you gain the great. You become pronounced. You demonstrate yourself, so as to put yourself out of the reach of false relations, and you draw to you the first-born of the world—those rare pilgrims whereof only one or two wander in nature at once, and before whom the vulgar great shew as spectres and shadows merely. *Friendship.*

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BETTER be a nettle in the side of your friend than his echo. The condition which high friendship demands is ability to do without it. To be capable of that high office requires great and sublime parts. There must be very two, before there can be very one. Let it be an alliance of two large formidable natures, mutually beheld, mutually feared, before yet they recognise the deep identity which beneath these disparities unites them. Let us buy our entrance to this guild by a long probation. Why should we desecrate noble and beautiful souls by intruding on them? Why insist on rash personal relations with your friend? Why go to his house, or know his mother and brother and sisters? Why be visited by him at your own? Are these things material to our covenant? Leave this touching and clawing. Let him be to me a spirit. A message, a thought, a sincerity, a glance from him, I want, but not news, nor pottage. I can get politics, and chat, and neighbourly conveniences, from cheaper companions. To my friend I write

Individuality

The Higher Giving

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a letter, and from him I receive a letter. That seems to you a little. Me it suffices. It is a spiritual gift worthy of him to give and of me to receive. It profanes nobody. In these warm lines the heart will trust itself, as it will not to the tongue, and pour out the prophecy of a godlier existence that all the annals of heroism have yet made good.

Friendship.

Giving

HE is a good man who can receive a gift well. We are either glad or sorry at a gift, and both emotions are unbecoming. Some violence, I think, is done, some degradation borne, when I rejoice or grieve at a gift. I am sorry when my independence is invaded, or when a gift comes from such as do not know my spirit, and so the act is not supported; and if the gift pleases me overmuch, then I should be ashamed that the donor should read my heart, and see that I love his commodity and not him. The gift, to be true, must be the flowing of the giver unto me, correspondent to my flowing unto him. When the waters are

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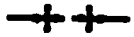
at a level, then my goods pass to him, and his to me. All his are mine, all mine his. I say to him, 'How can you give me this pot of oil, or this flagon of wine, when all your oil and wine is mine?' which belief of mine this gift seems to deny. Hence the fitness of beautiful, not useful, things for gifts. It is a great happiness to get off without injury and heart-burning from one who has had the ill-luck to be served by you. It is a very onerous business, this of being served, and the debtor naturally wishes to give you a slap. A golden text for these gentlemen is that which I so admire in the Buddhist who never thanks, and who says, 'Do not flatter your benefactors.' *Gifts.*



Receiving

THE reason of these discords I conceive to be, that there is no commensurability between a man and any gift. You cannot give anything to a magnanimous person. After you have served him, he at once puts you in debt by his magnanimity. The service a man renders his friend is trivial and selfish compared with the service he

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knows his friend stood in readiness to yield him, alike before he had begun to serve his friend, and now also. Compared with that goodwill I bear my friend, the benefit it is in my power to render him seems small.

Gifts.

Expression

IT is very certain that sincere and happy conversation doubles our powers; that in the effort to unfold the thought to a friend we make it clearer to ourselves, and surround it with illustrations that help and delight us. It may happen that each hears from the other a better wisdom than anyone else will ever hear from either.

Social Aims.

Inspiration of Friendship

THE soul of a man must be the servant of another. The true friend must have an attraction to whatever virtue is in us. Our chief want in life, is it not somebody who can make us do what we can? And we are easily great with the loved and honoured associate. We come out of our eggshell existence and

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see the great dome arching over us; see the zenith above and the nadir under us.

Social Aims.

SPEECH is power; speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel. It is to bring another out of his bad sense into your good sense. You are to be missionary and carrier of all that is good and noble. Virtues speak to virtues, vices to vices, each to their own kind in the people with whom we deal.

Speech

Social Aims.

NATURE steadily aims to protect each against every other. Each is self-defended. Nothing is more marked than the power by which individuals are guarded from individuals, in a world where every benefactor becomes so easily a malefactor, only by continuation of his activity into places where it is not due; where children seem so much at the mercy of their foolish parents, and where almost all men are too social and interfering. We rightly speak of the guardian angels of children. How superior in their security

Self-protection

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from infusions of evil persons, from vulgarity and second thought! They shed their own abundant beauty on the objects they behold. Therefore, they are not at the mercy of such poor educators as we adults. If we huff and chide them, they soon come not to mind it, and get a self-reliance; and if we indulge them to folly, they learn the limitation elsewhere.

Outside Influences

WE need not fear excessive influence. A more generous trust is permitted. Serve the great. Stick at no humiliation. Grudge no office thou canst render. Be the limb of their body, the breath of their mouth. Compromise thy egotism. Who cares for that, so thou gain aught wider and nobler? Never mind the taunt of Boswellism: the devotion may easily be greater than the wretched pride which is guarding its own skirts. Be another: not thyself, but a Platonist; not a soul, but a Christian; not a naturalist, but a Cartesian; not a poet, but a Shaksperian. In vain, the wheels of tendency will not stop, nor will all the forces of inertia, fear, or of love itself, hold thee there. On, and forever onward!

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The microscope observes a monad or wheel-insect among the infusories circulating in water. Presently, a dot appears on the animal, which enlarges to a slit, and it becomes two perfect animals. The ever-proceeding detachment appears not less in all thought, and in society. Children think they cannot live without their parents. But, long before they are aware of it, the black dot has appeared, and the detachment taken place. Any accident will now reveal to them their independence. *Social Aims.*

Each is Separate

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GOD, THE SOUL, PRAYER

Teach me your mood, O patient stars!
  Who climb each night the ancient sky,
Leaving on space no shade, no scars,
  No trace of age, no fear to die.

Nature.

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God is Not Fettered

WHEN we have broken our god of tradition, and ceased from our god of rhetoric, then may God fire the heart with his presence. It is the doubling of the heart itself, nay, the infinite enlargement of the heart with a power of growth to a new infinity on every side. It inspires in man an infallible trust. He has not the conviction, but the sight that the best is the true, and may in that thought easily dismiss all particular uncertainties and fears, and adjourn to the sure revelation of time the solution of his private riddles.

Let man, then, learn the revelation of all nature, and all thought to his heart; this, namely, that the Highest dwells with him; that the sources of nature are in his own mind, if the sentiment of duty is there. But if he would know what the great God speaketh, he must 'go into his closet and shut the door,' as Jesus said. God will not make himself manifest to cowards. *The Over Soul.*

Life's Commonalty

PERSONS are supplementary to the primary teaching of the soul. In youth we

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are mad for persons. Childhood and youth see all the world in them. But the larger experience of man discovers the identical nature appearing through them all. Persons themselves acquaint us with the impersonal. In all conversation between two persons, tacit reference is made as to a third party, to a common nature. That third party or common nature is not social; it is impersonal, is God. *The Over Soul.*

In Touch with God

THIS should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself, unless he speak the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see—painfully recollecting the exact words they spoke; afterwards, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them, and are willing to let the words go; for,

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at any time, they can use words as good, when occasion comes. So was it with us; so will it be, if we proceed. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

Self Reliance.

Prayer

PRAYER that craves a particular commodity—any thing less than all good, is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good. *Self Reliance.*

Simplicity

THE relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh, he should communicate not one thing, but all things; should

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im-
licity

fill the world with his voice; should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple, and receives a divine wisdom, then old things pass away—means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it—one thing as much as another. All things are dissolved to their centre by their cause, and in the universal miracle petty and particular miracles disappear. This is and must be. If, therefore, a man claims to know and speak of God, and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fulness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence then this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and majesty of the soul. Time and space

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are but physiological colours which the eye maketh, but the soul is light; where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury, if it be anything more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming.

Self Reliance.

Peace

THE lessons of the moral sentiment are once for all, an emancipation from that anxiety which takes the joy out of all life. It teaches a great peace. It comes itself from the highest place. It is that, which being in all sound natures, and strongest in the best and most gifted men, we know to be implanted by the Creator of men. It is a commandment at every moment and in every condition of life to do the duty of that moment and abstain from doing wrong. And it is so near and inward and constitutional to each that no commandment can compare with it in authority. All wise men regard it as the voice of the Creator himself.

The Preacher.

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A Common Creed

EVERY movement of religious opinion is of profound importance to political and social life, and this of to-day has the best omens as being of the most expansive humanity, since it seeks to find in every nation and creed the imperishable doctrines. I find myself always struck and stimulated by a good anecdote, any trait of heroism, of faithful service. I do not find that the age or country makes any difference; no, nor the language the actors spoke, nor the religion which they professed, whether Arab in the desert, or Frenchman in the Academy. I see that sensible men and conscientious men all over the world were of one religion—the religion of well-doing, and daring, men of sturdy truth, men of integrity and feeling for others. My inference is that there is a statement of religion possible which makes all skepticism absurd. *The Preacher.*

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CHARACTER

For he that feeds men serveth few;
He serves all who dares be true.

The Celestial Love.

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CHARACTER is a natural power, like light and heat, and all nature co-operates with it. The reason why we feel one man's presence, and do not feel another's, is as simple as gravity. This natural force is no more to be withstood than any other natural force. We can drive a stone upward for a moment into the air, but it is yet true that all stones will forever fall; and whatever instances can be quoted of unpunished theft, or of a lie which somebody credited, justice must prevail, and it is the privilege of truth to make itself believed. Character is this moral order seen through the medium of an individual nature.

Character.

Character a Natural Force

I HAVE read that those who listened to Lord Chatham felt that there was something finer in the man than anything which he said. It has been complained of our brilliant English historian of the French Revolution, that when he has told all his facts about Mirabeau, they do not justify his estimate of his genius. The Gracchi, Agis, Cleomenes, and others of Plutarch's heroes, do not in the record of facts

No Need of Works

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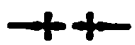
equal their own fame. Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Essex, Sir Walter Raleigh, are men of great figure, and of few deeds. We cannot find the smallest part of the personal weight of Washington in the narrative of his exploits. The authority of the name of Schiller is too great for his books. This inequality of the reputation to the works or the anecdotes, is not accounted for by saying that the reverberation is longer than the thunder-clap; but somewhat resided in these men which begot an expectation that outran all their performance. The largest part of their power was latent. This is that which we call Character —a reserved force which acts directly by presence, and without means. *Character.*



The Value of Defeats

OUR strength grows out of our weakness. Not until we are pricked and stung and sorely shot at, awakens the indignation which arms itself with secret forces. A great man is always willing to be little. Whilst he sits on the cushion of advantages, he goes to sleep. When he is pushed, tormented, defeated, he

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has a chance to learn something; he has been put on his wits, on his manhood; he has gained facts; learns his ignorance; is cured of the insanity of conceit; has got moderation and real skill.

Compensation.

Character is Victory

CHARACTER dulls the impression of particular events. When we see the conqueror, we do not think much of any one battle or success. We see that we had exaggerated the difficulty. It was easy to him. The great man is not convulsible or tormentable. He is so much, that events pass over him without much impression. People say sometimes, 'See what I have overcome; see how cheerful I am; see how completely I have triumphed over these black events.' Not if they still remind me of the black event—they have not yet conquered. Is it conquest to be a gay and decorated sepulchre, or a half-crazed widow hysterically laughing? True conquest is the causing the black event to fade and disappear, as an early cloud of insignificant result in a history so large and advancing.

Circles.

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Character is Shown by Works

HOW many are the acts of one man in which we recognise the same character! See the variety of the sources of our information in respect to the Greek genius. Thus at first we have the *civil history* of that people, as Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plutarch have given it—a very sufficient account of what manner of persons they were, and what they did. Then we have the same soul expressed for us again in their *literature;* in poems, drama, and philosophy: a very complete form. Then we have it once more in their *architecture*—the purest sensuous beauty—the perfect medium never overstepping the limit of charming propriety and grace. Then we have it once more in *sculpture*—'the tongue on the balance of expression,' those forms in every action, at every age of life, ranging through all the scale of condition, from god to beast, and never transgressing the ideal serenity, but in convulsive exertion the liege of order and of law. Thus, of the genius of one remarkable people, we have a fourfold representation—the most various expression of one moral thing: and to the senses what

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more unlike than an ode of Pindar, a marble Centaur, the peristyle of the Parthenon, and the last actions of Phocion? Yet do these varied external expressions proceed from one national mind. *History.*

THE infallible index of true progress is found in the tone the man takes. Neither his age, nor his breeding, nor company, nor books, nor actions, nor talents, nor all together, can hinder him from being deferential to a higher spirit than his own. If he have not found his home in God, his manners, his forms of speech, the turn of his sentences, the build, shall I say, of all his opinions, will involuntarily confess it, let him brave it out how he will. If he have found his centre, the Deity will shine through him, through all the disguises of ignorance, of ungenial temperament, of unfavourable circumstance. *The Over Soul.*

Character Cannot be Hid

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SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Wilt thou seal up the avenues of ill?
Pay every debt as if God wrote the bill.

Life.

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THE misery of man appears like childish petulance, when we explore the steady and prodigal provision that has been made for his support and delight on this green ball which floats him through the heavens.

Commodity.

Enough for All

DEBT, grinding debt, whose iron face the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius fear and hate—debt, which consumes so much time, which so cripples and disheartens a great spirit with cares that seem so base, is a preceptor whose lessons cannot be foregone, and is needed most by those who suffer from it most. Moreover, property, which has been well compared to snow—'if it fall level to-day, it will be blown into drifts to-morrow.'

Discipline.

Property

THE young man, on entering life, finds the way to lucrative employments blocked with abuses. The ways of trade are grown selfish to the borders of theft, and supple to the borders (if not beyond

Baseness of Trade

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Baseness of Trade

the borders) of fraud. The employments of commerce are not intrinsically unfit for a man, or less genial to his faculties, but these are now in their general course so vitiated by derelictions and abuses at which all connive, that it requires more vigor and resources than can be expected of every young man, to right himself in them; he is lost in them; he cannot move hand or foot in them. Has he genius and virtue? the less does he find them fit for him to grow in, and if he would thrive in them, he must sacrifice all the brilliant dreams of boyhood and youth as dreams; he must forget the prayers of his childhood; and he must take on him the harness of routine and obsequiousness. If not so minded, nothing is left him but to begin the world anew, as he does who puts the spade into the ground for food. We are all implicated, of course, in this charge; it is only necessary to ask a few questions as to the progress of the articles of commerce from the fields where they grew, to our houses, to become aware that we eat and drink and

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wear perjury and fraud in a hundred commodities. *Man the Reformer.*

All Are Responsible

SUPPOSE a man is so unhappy as to be born a saint, with keen perceptions but with the conscience and love of an angel, and he is to get his living in the world; he finds himself excluded from all lucrative works; he has no farm, and he cannot get one; for, to earn money enough to buy one requires a sort of concentration toward money, which is the selling himself for a number of years, and to him the present hour is as sacred and inviolable as any future hour. Of course, whilst another man has no land, my title to mine, your title to yours, is at once vitiated. Inextricable seem to be the twinings and tendrils of this evil, and we all involve ourselves in it the deeper by forming connections, by wives, and children, by benefits and debts. *Man the Reformer.*

Each Man's Part

I DO not wish to be absurd and pedantic in reform. I do not wish to push my

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criticism on the state of things around me to that extravagant mark, that shall compel me to suicide, or to an absolute isolation from the advantages of civil society. If we suddenly plant our foot and say — I will neither eat nor drink nor wear nor touch any food or fabric which I do not know to be innocent, or deal with any person whose whole manner of life is not clear and rational, we shall stand still. Whose is so? Not mine; not thine; not his. But I think we must clear ourselves each one by the interrogation, whether we have earned our bread to-day by the hearty contribution of our energies to the common benefit; and we must not cease to tend to the correction of these flagrant wrongs, by laying one stone aright every day.

Man the Reformer.

Love Gives the Key

LET our affection flow out to our fellows; it would operate in a day the greatest of all revolutions. It is better to work on institutions by the sun than by the wind. The state must consider the poor man, and

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all voices must speak for him. Every child that is born must have a just chance for his bread. Let the amelioration in our laws of property proceed from the concession of the rich, not from the grasping of the poor. Let us begin by habitual imparting. Let us understand that the equitable rule is, that no one should take more than his share, let him be ever so rich.

Man the Reformer.

Failure of Reforms

REFORMS have their high origin in an ideal justice, but they do not retain the purity of an idea. They are quickly organized in some low, inadequate form, and present no more poetic image to the mind than the evil tradition which they reprobated. They mix the fire of the moral sentiment with personal and party heats, with measureless exaggerations, and the blindness that prefers some darling measure to justice and truth.

Lecture on the Times.

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Government Shows Man's Distrust of Himself

I DO not call to mind a single human being who has steadily denied the authority of the laws, on the simple ground of his own moral nature. Such designs, full of genius and full of fate as they are, are not entertained except avowedly as air-pictures. If the individual who exhibits them dare to think them practicable, he disgusts scholars and churchmen; and men of talent, and women of superior sentiments, cannot hide their contempt. Not the less does nature continue to fill the heart of youth with suggestions of this enthusiasm, and there are now men—if indeed I can speak in the plural number—more exactly, I will say, I have just been conversing with one man, to whom no weight of adverse experience will make it for a moment appear impossible, that thousands of human beings might exercise toward each other the grandest and simplest sentiments, as well as a knot of friends, or a pair of lovers. *Politics.*

Civilisation but Dawned

WE think our civilisation near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star. In our bar-

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barous society the influence of character is in its infancy. As a political power, as the rightful lord who is to tumble all rulers from their chairs, its presence is hardly yet suspected. Every thought which genius and piety throw into the world, alters the world. The gladiators in the lists of power feel, through all their frocks of force and simulation, the presence of worth. I think the very strife of trade and ambition are confession of this divinity; and successes in those fields are the poor amends, the fig-leaf with which the shamed soul attempts to hide its nakedness.

Self Reliance.

Conservative and Radical

CONSERVATISM stands on man's confessed limitations; reform on his indisputable infinitude; conservatism on circumstance; liberalism on power; one goes to make an adroit member of the social frame; the other to postpone all things to the man himself; conservatism is debonair and social; reform is individual and imperious. We are reformers in spring and summer; in autumn and winter, we stand by the old; reformers in

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the morning, conservers at night. Reform is affirmative, conservatism negative; conservatism goes for comfort, reform for truth. Conservatism is more candid to behold another's worth; reform more disposed to maintain and increase its own. Conservatism makes no poetry, breathes no prayer, has no invention; it is all memory. Reform has no gratitude, no prudence, no husbandry.

The Conservative.

No End is Worth While

THE reforms whose fame now fills the land with Temperance, Anti-Slavery, Non-Resistance, No Government, Equal Labor, fair and generous as each appears, are poor, bitter things when prosecuted for themselves as an end.

But the soul can be appeased not by a deed but by a tendency. It is in a hope that she feels her wings. You shall love rectitude and not the disuse of money or the avoidance of trade; an unimpeded mind, and not a monkish diet; sympathy and usefulness, and not hoeing or coopering. Tell me not how great your project is, the civil liberation of the

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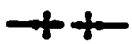
world, its conversion into a Christian church, the establishment of public education, cleaner diet, a new division of labor and of land, laws of love for laws of property—I say to you plainly there is no end to which your practical faculty can aim, so sacred or so large, that, if pursued for itself, will not at last become carrion and an offense to the nostril.

The Method of Nature.



Impractical Reforms

WHAT if some of the objections whereby our institutions are assailed are extreme and speculative, and the reformers tend to idealism; that only shows the extravagance of the abuses which have driven the mind into the opposite extreme. It is when your facts and persons grow unreal and fantastic by too much falsehood, that the scholar flies for refuge to the world of ideas, and aims to recruit and replenish nature from that source. Let ideas establish their legitimate sway again in society, let life be fair and poetic, and the scholars will gladly be lovers, citizens, and philanthropists. *Man the Reformer.*

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WHEN many persons shall have done this, when the majority shall admit the necessity of reform in all these institutions, their abuses will be redressed, and the way will be open again to the advantages which arise from the division of labor, and a man may select the fittest employment for his peculiar talent again, without compromise.

Man the Reformer.

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LOVE

The sense of the world is short—
Long and various the report—
  To love and be beloved;
Men and gods have not outlearned
And, how oft soe'er they've turned,
  'Twill not be improved.

Eros.

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LITTLE think the youth and maiden who are glancing at each other across crowded rooms, with eyes so full of mutual intelligence — of the precious fruit long hereafter to proceed from this new, quite external stimulus. The work of vegetation begins first in the irritability of the bark and leaf-buds. From exchanging glances, they advance to acts of courtesy, of gallantry, then to fiery passion, to plighting troth and marriage. Passion beholds its object as a perfect unit. The soul is wholly embodied, and the body is wholly ensouled.

The Dawn of Love

'Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
That one might almost say her body thought.'

Romeo, if dead, should be cut up into little stars to make the heavens fine. Life, with this pair, has no other aim, asks no more than Juliet—than Romeo.

Meantime, as life wears on, it proves a game of permutation and combination of

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all possible positions of the parties, to extort all the resources of each, and acquaint each with the whole strength and weakness of the other. For it is the nature and end of this relation, that they should represent the human race to each other. All that is in the world which is or ought to be known, is cunningly wrought into the texture of man, of woman.

'The person love does to us fit,
Like manna, has the taste of all in it.'

Love.

The Noontide of Love

The world rolls: the circumstances vary every hour. All the angels that inhabit this temple of the body appear at the windows, and all the gnomes and vices also. By all the virtues they are united. If there be virtue, all the vices are known as such; they confess and flee. Their once flaming regard is sobered by time in either breast, and losing in violence what it gains in extent, it becomes a thorough good understanding. They resign each other, without complaint, to the good offices which man and woman are severally appointed to discharge in time;

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and exchange the passion, which once could not lose sight of its object, for a cheerful, disengaged furtherance, whether present or absent, of each other's designs. Looking at these aims, with which two persons, a man and a woman, so variously and correlatively gifted, are shut up in one house to spend in the nuptial society forty or fifty years, I do not wonder at the emphasis with which the heart prophesies this crisis from early infancy, at the profuse beauty with which the instincts deck the nuptial bower, and nature and intellect and art emulate each other in the gifts and the melody they bring to the epithalamium.

The Evening of Love

Thus are we put in training for a love which knows not sex, nor person, nor partiality, but which seeketh virtue and wisdom everywhere, to the end of increasing virtue and wisdom.

Love.

One Man Supplements Another

I CAN do that by another which I cannot do alone. I can say to you what I cannot first say to myself.

Representative Men.

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Mastery

WHO has more soul than I masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the gravitation of spirits; who has less, I rule with like facility. *Self-Reliance.*

Love's Power

THERE is a power in love to divine another's destiny better than that other can, and by heroic encouragements, hold him to his task. What has friendship so signaled as its sublime attraction to whatever virtue is in us? We will never more think cheaply of ourselves, or of life. We are piqued to some purpose, and the industry of the diggers on the railroad will not again shame us.

Under this head, too, falls that homage, very pure, as I think, which all ranks pay to the hero of the day, from Coriolanus and Gracchus, down to Pitt, Lafayette, Wellington, Webster, Lamartine. Hear the shouts in the street! The people cannot see him enough. They delight in a man.

Representative Men.

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THE passion re-makes the world for the youth. It makes all things alive and significant. Nature grows conscious. Every bird on the boughs of the tree sings now to his heart and soul. Almost the notes are articulate. The clouds have faces as he looks on them. The trees of the forest, the waving grass, and the peeping flowers, have grown intelligent; and almost he fears to trust them with the secret which they seem to invite. Yet nature soothes and sympathises. In the green solitude he finds a dearer home than with men.

Love's Transforming Power

Behold there in the wood the fine madman! He is a palace of sweet sounds and sights; he dilates; he is twice a man; he walks with arms akimbo; he soliloquises; he accosts the grass and the trees; he feels the blood of the violet, the clover, and the lily, in his veins; and he talks with the brook that wets his foot.

The causes that have sharpened his perceptions of natural beauty have made him love music and verse. It is a fact often observed, that men have written good verses

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Love's Transforming Power

under the inspiration of passion, who cannot write well under any other circumstances.

The like force has the passion over all his nature. It expands the sentiment; it makes the clown gentle, and gives the coward heart. Into the most pitiful and abject it will infuse a heart and courage to defy the world, so only it have the countenance of the beloved object. In giving him to another, it still more gives him to himself. He is a new man, with new perceptions, new and keener purposes, and a religious solemnity of character and aims. He does not longer appertain to his family and society. *He* is somewhat. *He* is a person. *He* is a soul.

Love.

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HEROISM AND VIRTUE

The hero is not fed on sweets,
Daily his own heart he eats;
Chambers of the great are jails,
And head-winds right for royal sails.

Heroism.

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Heroism

SELF-TRUST is the essence of Heroism. It is the state of the soul at war; and its ultimate objects are the last defiance of falsehood and wrong, and the power to bear all that can be inflicted by evil agents. It speaks the truth, and it is just. It is generous, hospitable, temperate, scornful of petty calculations, and scornful of being scorned. It persists; it is of an undaunted boldness, and of a fortitude not to be wearied out. Its jest is the littleness of common life. That false prudence which dotes on health and wealth is the foil, the butt and merriment of heroism.

Heroism.

Persistency

THE characteristic of a genuine heroism is its persistency. All men have wandering impulses, fits and starts of generosity. But when you have resolved to be great, abide by yourself, and do not weakly try to reconcile yourself with the world. The heroic cannot be the common, nor the common the heroic. Yet we have the weakness to expect the sympathy of people in those actions whose excellence is, that they outrun sympathy, and

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appeal to a tardy justice. If you would serve your brother, because it is fit for you to serve him, do not take back your words when you find that prudent people do not commend you. Be true to your own act, and congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant, and broken the monotony of a decorous age. It was a high counsel that I once heard given to a young person, 'Always do what you are afraid to do.'

Heroism.

Heroism in Daily Life

TIMES of heroism are generally times of terror; but the day never shines in which this element may not work. The circumstances of man, we say, are historically somewhat better in this country, and at this hour, than perhaps ever before. More freedom exists for culture. It will not now run against an axe at the first step out of the beaten track of opinion. But whoso is heroic will always find crises to try his edge. Human virtue demands her champions and martyrs, and the trial of persecution always proceeds.

Heroism.

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TRUST thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine Providence has found for you; the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. *Self Reliance.*

Self-trust

THE soul strives amain to live and work through all things. It would be the only fact. All things shall be added unto it—power, pleasure, knowledge, beauty. The particular man aims to be somebody; to set up for himself. Men seek to be great; they would have offices, wealth, power, and fame. They think that to be great is to get only one side of nature—the sweet, without the other side—the bitter. *Spiritual Laws.*

Greatness

WHAT I must do, is all that concerns me; not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder, because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better

Independence

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than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

Self Reliance.

The World Spirit

THINGS seem to tend downward, to justify despondency, to promote rogues, to defeat the just; and, by knaves, as by martyrs, the just cause is carried forward. Although knaves win in every political struggle, although society seems to be delivered over from the hands of one set of criminals into the hands of another set of criminals, as fast as the government is changed, and the march of civilization is a train of felonies, yet, general ends are somehow answered. We see, now, events forced on, which seem to retard or retrograde the civility of ages. But the world-spirit is a good swimmer, and storms and waves cannot drown him. He snaps his finger at laws: and so, throughout history, heaven seems to affect low and poor means. Through the years and the centuries, through evil

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agents, through toys and atoms, a great and beneficent tendency irresistibly streams.

Let a man learn to look for the permanent in the mutable and fleeting; let him learn to bear the disappearance of things he was wont to reverence, without losing his reverence; let him learn that he is here, not to work, but to be worked upon; and that, though abyss open under abyss, and opinion displace opinion, all are at last contained in the Eternal cause—

'If my bark sink, 'tis to another sea.'

Representative Men.

Harmonious Acts

FEAR never but you shall be consistent in whatever variety of actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will the actions will be harmonious, however unlike they seem. These varieties are lost sight of when seen at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. This is only microscopic criticism. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself

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True Honor is Self-Sufficient

to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself, and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness always appeals to the future. If I can be great enough now to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances, and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this. What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. There they all stand, and shed a united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels to every man's eye. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and America into Adams's eye. Honour is venerable to us, because it is no ephemeris. It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day, because it is

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not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage, because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person. *Self Reliance.*

THERE is no virtue which is final; all are initial. The virtues of society are vices of the saint. The terror of reform is the discovery that we must cast away our virtues, or what we have always esteemed such, into the same pit that has consumed our grosser vices. *Circles.*

Progress in Virtue

WHOSO would be a man must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of our own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. *Self Reliance.*

The Inner Light

THERE is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the convic-

Each Man a New Force

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tion that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. *Self Reliance.*

Contentment

WHY should we make it a point with our false modesty to disparage that man we are, and that form of being assigned to us? A good man is contented. I love and honour Epaminondas, but I do not wish to be Epaminondas. I hold it more just to love the world of this hour than the world of his hour. Nor can you, if I am true, excite me to the least uneasiness by saying, 'he acted, and thou sittest still.' I see action to be good, when the need is, and sitting still to be also good. Epaminondas, if he was the man I take him for, would

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have sat still with joy and peace, if his lot had been mine. Heaven is large, and affords space for all modes of love and fortitude. Why should we be busy-bodies and super-serviceable? Action and inaction are alike to the true. One piece of the tree is cut for a weathercock, and one for the sleeper of a bridge; the virtue of the wood is apparent in both.

No False Modesty

I DESIRE not to disgrace the soul. The fact that I am here, certainly shews me that the soul had need of an organ here. Shall I not assume the post? Shall I skulk and dodge and duck with my unseasonable apologies and vain modesty, and imagine my being here impertinent?

The Use of Defects

THE good are befriended even by weakness and defect. As no man had ever a point of pride that was not injurious to him, so no man had ever a defect that was not somewhere made useful to him. The stag in the fable admired his horns and blamed his feet; but when the hunter came,

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his feet saved him, and afterwards, caught in the thicket, his horns destroyed him. Every man in his lifetime needs to thank his faults. As no man thoroughly understands a truth until first he has contended against it, so no man has a thorough acquaintance with the hindrances or talents of men until he has suffered from the one, and seen the triumph of the other over his own want of the same. Has he a defect of temper that unfits him to live in society? Thereby he is driven to entertain himself alone, and acquire habits of self-help; and thus, like the wounded oyster, he mends his shell with pearl. *Compensation.*

Consistency

A FOOLISH consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Out upon your guarded lips! Sew them up with packthread, do. Else, if you would be a man, speak what you think to-day in words

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as hard as cannon-balls, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day. Ah, then, exclaim the aged ladies, you shall be sure to be misunderstood. Misunderstood! It is a right fool's word. Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

Self Reliance.

Do not craze yourself with thinking, but go about your business anywhere. Life is not intellectual or critical, but sturdy. Its chief good is for well-mixed people who can enjoy what they find without question. Nature hates peeping, and our mothers speak her very sense when they say, 'Children, eat your victuals, and say no more of it.' To fill the hour—that is happiness; to fill the hour, and leave no crevice for a repentance or an approval.

Experience.

Analysis

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Self-appreciation

LET a man, then, know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper, in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him a palace, a statue, or a costly book have an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seem to say like that, 'Who are you, sir?' Yet they are all his, suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties that they will come out and take possession. The picture waits for my verdict: it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise.

Self Reliance.

Penalty

WE feel defrauded of the retribution due to evil acts, because the criminal adheres to his vice and contumacy, and does not come to a crisis or judgment anywhere in visible nature. There is no stunning confutation of his nonsense before men and angels.

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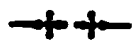
Has he therefore outwitted the law? Inasmuch as he carries the malignity and the lie with him, he so far deceases from nature. In some manner there will be a demonstration of the wrong to the understanding also; but should we not see it, this deadly deduction makes square the eternal account.

Compensation.



Every Man Should Develop His Own Best

A POINT of education that I can never too much insist upon is this tenet that every individual man has a bias which he must obey, and that it is only as he feels and obeys this that he rightly develops and attains his legitimate power in the world. It is his magnetic needle, which points always in one direction to his proper path, with more or less variation from any other man's. He is never happy nor strong until he finds it, keeps it; learns to be at home with himself; learns to watch the delicate hints and insights that come to him, and to have the entire assurance of his own mind. *Letters and Social Aims.*

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Payment Inevitable

A WISE man will extend this lesson to all parts of life, and know that it is always the part of prudence to face every claimant, and pay every just demand on your time, your talents, or your heart. Always pay; for, first or last, you must pay your entire debt. Persons and events may stand for a time between you and justice, but it is only a postponement. You must pay at last your own debt. If you are wise, you will dread a prosperity which only loads you with more. Benefit is the end of nature. But for every benefit which you receive, a tax is levied. He is great who confers the most benefits. He is base—and that is the one base thing in the universe—to receive favours, and render none. In the order of nature we cannot render benefits to those from whom we receive them, or only seldom. But the benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody. Beware of too much good staying in your hand. It will fast corrupt and worm worms. Pay it away quickly in some sort. *Compensation.*

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Completeness

THERE is a prize we are all aiming at, and the more power and goodness we have, so much more the energy of that aim. Every human being has a right to it, and in the pursuit we do not stand in each other's way. For it has a long scale of degrees, a wide variety of views, and every aspirant, by his success in the pursuit, does not hinder but helps his competitors. I might call it completeness, but that is later—perhaps adjourned for ages. I prefer to call it Greatness. It is the fulfilment of a natural tendency in each man.

Letters and Social Aims.

Losses

WE cannot part with our friends. We cannot let our angels go. We do not see that they only go out that archangels may come in. We are idolaters of the Old. We do not believe in the riches of the soul, in its proper eternity and omnipresence. We do not believe there is any force in to-day to rival or re-create that beautiful yesterday. The voice of the Almighty saith, 'Up and onward for evermore!' We cannot stay amid the ruins. Neither will we rely on the New.

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And yet the compensations of calamity are made apparent to the understanding also, after long intervals of time. A fever, a mutilation, a cruel disappointment, a loss of wealth, a loss of friends, seems at the moment unpaid loss, and unpayable. But the sure years reveal the deep remedial force that underlies all facts. The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius; for it commonly operates revolutions in our way of life, terminates an epoch of infancy or of youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation, or a household, or style of living, and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character. It permits or constrains the formation of new acquaintances and the reception of new influences, that prove of the first importance to the next years; and the man or woman who would have remained a sunny garden-flower, with no room for its roots, and too much sunshine for its head, by the falling of the walls and the neglect of the gardener, is made the banian of the

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forest, yielding shade and fruit to wide neighbourhoods of men. *Compensation.*

Gratitude

I AM thankful for small mercies. I compared notes with one of my friends who expects every thing of the universe, and is disappointed when any thing is less than the best, and I found that I begin at the other extreme, expecting nothing, and am always full of thanks for moderate goods. *Experience.*

Originality

INSIST on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous, half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakspeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? *Self Reliance.*

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The Unessential

OUR young people are diseased with the theological problems of original sin, origin of evil, predestination, and the like. These never presented a practical difficulty to any man—never darkened across any man's road, who did not go out of his way to seek them. These are the soul's mumps and measles and whooping-coughs; and those who have not caught them cannot describe their health or prescribe the cure. A simple mind will not know these enemies. *Spiritual Laws.*

Courage is Contagious

WHAT a new face courage puts on everything! A determined man, by his very attitude and the tone of his voice, puts a stop to defeat, and begins to conquer. *Letters and Spiritual Aims.*

Spontaneity

WE love characters in proportion as they are impulsive and spontaneous. The less a man thinks or knows about his virtues the better we like him. Timoleon's victories are the best victories; which ran and flowed like Homer's verses, Plutarch

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said. When we see a soul whose acts are all regal, graceful and pleasant as roses, we must thank God that such things can be and are, and not turn sourly on the angel, and say, "Crump is a better man with his grunting resistance to all his native devils." *Spiritual Laws.*

Man is Better Than he Seems

MEN in all ways are better than they seem. They like flattery for the moment, but they know the truth for their own. It is a foolish cowardice which keeps us from trusting them, and speaking to them rude truth. They resent your honesty for an instant, they will thank you for it always. All that a man has, will he give for right relations with his mates. All that he has, will he give for an erect demeanour in every company and on each occasion.

Selfishness

AS every man at heart wishes the best and not inferior society, wishes to be convicted of his error, and to come to himself, so he wishes that the same healing should not stop in his thought, but should pene-

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trate his will or active power. The selfish man suffers more from his selfishness, than he from whom that selfishness withholds some important benefit. What he most wishes is to be lifted to some higher platform, that he may see beyond his present fear the transalpine good, so that his fear, his coldness, his custom may be broken up like fragments of ice, melted and carried away in the great stream of good will. Do you ask my aid? I also wish to be a benefactor. I wish more to be a benefactor and servant, than you wish to be served by me; and surely the greatest good fortune that could befall me, is precisely to be so moved by you that I should say, "Take me and all mine, and use me and mine freely to your ends!" for, I could not say it, otherwise than because a great enlargement had come to my heart and mind, which made me superior to my fortunes.

The Spirit of True Aid

—+—

Love of Truth

NOTHING shall warp me from the belief that every man is a lover of truth. There is no pure lie, no pure malignity in nature.

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The entertainment of the proposition of depravity is the last profligacy and profanation. There is no skepticism, no atheism but that. Could it be received into common belief, suicide would unpeople the planet. It has had a name to live in some dogmatic theology, but each man's innocence and his real liking of his neighbour, have kept it a dead letter. I remember standing at the polls one day, when the anger of the political contest gave a certain grimness to the faces of the independent electors, and a good man at my side, looking on the people, remarked, "I am satisfied that the largest part of these men, on either side, mean to vote right."

The New England Reformer.

Men Mean Well

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IMMORTALITY

Oh what is Heaven but the fellowship
Of minds that each can stand against the world
By its own meek and incorruptible will?

Self Reliance

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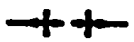
I THINK all sound minds rest on a certain preliminary conviction, namely, that if it be best that conscious personal life shall continue, it will continue; if not best, then it will not and, we, if we saw the whole, should of course see that it was better so.

Immortality.

Life's Outcome



THE ground of hope is in the infinity of the world; which infinity reappears in every particle, the powers of all society in every individual, and of all mind in every mind. I know against all appearances that the universe can receive no detriment; that there is a remedy for every wrong and a satisfaction for every soul. Here is this wonderful thought. But whence came it? Who put it in the mind? It was not I, it was not you; it is elemental, belongs to thought and virtue, and whenever we have either, we see the beams of this light. When the Master of the universe has points to carry in his government he impresses his will in the structure of minds.

Immortality.

Where Did the Human Heart Find Its Hope?

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Life Is Education

EVERYTHING is prospective, and man is to live hereafter. That the world is for his education is the only sane solution of the enigma. And I think that the naturalist works not for himself, but for the believing mind, which turns his discoveries to revelations and receives them as private tokens of the grand good-will of the Creator.

Immortality.

The Heart's Desires Have a Cause Behind Them

NOW there is nothing in nature capricious, or whimsical, or accidental, or unsupported. Nature never moves by jumps, but always in steady and supported advances. The implanting of a desire indicates that the gratification of that desire is in the constitution of the creature that feels it; the wish for food, the wish for motion, the wish for sleep, for society, for knowledge, are not random whims, but grounded in the structure of the creature, and meant to be satisfied by food, by motion, by sleep, by society, by knowledge. If there is the desire to live and in larger sphere, with more knowledge, and power, it is because knowledge and power are good for us,

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and we are the natural depositories of these gifts. The love of life is out of all proportion to the value set on a single day, and seems to indicate like all our other experiences, a conviction of immense resources and possibilities proper to us, on which we have never drawn. *Immortality.*

The Future Will Be Better Than the Past

ALL I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen. Whatever it be which the great Providence prepares for us, it must be something large and generous, and in the great style of his works. The future must be up to the style of our faculties, of memory, of hope, of imagination, of reason. *Immortality.*

Man Loves the Unattainable

A VERY really able man, in whatever direction he work—a man of large affairs, an inventor, a statesman, an orator, a poet, a painter—if you talk sincerely with him, considers his work, however much admired, as far short of what it should be. What is this Better, this flying Ideal, but the perpetual promise of his Creator?

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We believe in immortality by instinct—the soul sees it. I am a better believer, and all serious souls are better believers in immortality, that we can give grounds for. The real evidence is too subtle, or is higher than we can write down in propositions, and therefore Wordsworth's "Ode" is the best modern essay on the subject.

Immortality.

Life is Constant Progress

WITHIN every man's thought is a higher thought, within the character he exhibits to-day, a higher character. The youth puts off the illusions of the child, the man puts off the ignorance and tumultuous passions of youth; proceeding thence puts off the egotism of manhood, and becomes at last a public and universal soul. He is rising to greater heights, but also rising to realities; the outer relations and circumstances dying out, he entering deeper into God, God into him, until the last garment of egotism falls, and he is with God—shares the will and the immensity of the First Cause.

Immortality.

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NATURE, BEAUTY, TRAVEL

Yet spoke yon purple mountain,
Yet said yon ancient wood,
That Night or Day, that Love or Crime,
Lead all souls to the Good.

The Park

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NATURE will not have us fret and fume. She does not like our benevolence or our learning, much better than she likes our frauds and wars. When we come out of the caucus, or the bank, or the Abolition-convention, or the Temperance-meeting, or the Transcendental club, into the fields and woods, she says to us, "So hot? my little sir." *Nature.*

Nature

WHO loves nature? Who does not? Is it only poets, and men of leisure and cultivation, who live with her? No; but also hunters, farmers, grooms, and butchers, though they express their affection in their choice of life, and not in their choice of words. The writer wonders what the coachman or the hunter values in riding, in horses, and dogs. It is not superficial qualities. When you talk with him, he holds these at as slight a rate as you. His worship is sympathetic: he has no definitions, but he is commanded in nature, by the living power which he feels to be there present. No imitation, or playing of these things,

Love of Nature

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would content him; he loves the earnest of the north-wind, of rain, of stone, and wood, and iron. A beauty not explicable is dearer than a beauty which we can see to the end of. It is nature the symbol, nature certifying the supernatural, body overflowed by life, which he worships with coarse, but sincere rites. *The Poet.*

Why We Love Nature

NATURE is loved by what is best in us. It is loved as the city of God, although, or rather because there is no citizen. The sunset is unlike any thing that is underneath it: it wants men. And the beauty of nature must always seem unreal and mocking, until the landscape has human figures, that are as good as itself. *Nature.*

Beauty is of the Soul

NOT in nature but in man is all the beauty and worth he sees. The world is very empty, and is indebted to this gilding, exalting soul for all its pride. "Earth fills her lap with splendours" *not her own.* The vale of Tempe, Tivoli, and Rome are earth and water, rocks and sky. There are

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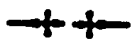
as good earth and water in a thousand places, yet how unaffecting! *Spiritual Laws.*



Nature's Healing Power

THE tempered light of the woods is like a perpetual morning, and is stimulating and heroic. The anciently reported spells of these places creep on us. The stems of pines, hemlocks, and oaks, almost gleam like iron on the excited eye. The incommunicable trees begin to persuade us to live with them, and quit our life of solemn trifles. Here no history, or church, or state is interpolated on the divine sky and the immortal year. How easily we might walk onward into the opening landscape, absorbed by new pictures, and by thoughts fast succeeding each other, until by degrees the recollection of home was crowded out of the mind, all memory obliterated by the tyranny of the present, and we were led to triumph by nature.

These enchantments are medicinal, they sober and heal us. These are plain pleasures, kindly and native to us. We come to our own, and make friends with matter,

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which the ambitious chatter of the schools would persuade us to despise. We never can part with it; the mind loves its old home: as water to our thirst, so is the rock, the ground, to our eyes, and hands, and feet.

Nature.

Beauty is Within the Soul

THOUGH we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us, or we find it not. The best of beauty is a finer charm than skill in surfaces, in outlines, or rules of art can ever teach, namely, a radiation, from the work of art, of human character—a wonderful expression, through stone or canvas or musical sound, of the deepest and simplest attributes of our nature, and therefore most intelligible at last to those souls which have these attributes. In the sculptures of the Greeks, in the masonry of the Romans, and in the pictures of the Tuscan and Venetian masters, the highest charm is the universal language they speak. A confession of moral nature, of purity, love, and hope, breathes from them all. That which we carry to them,

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the same we bring back more fairly illustrated in the memory. In proportion to his force, the artist will find in his work an outlet for his proper character. He must not be in any manner pinched or hindered by his material, but through his necessity of imparting himself, the adamant will be wax in his hands, and will allow an adequate communication of himself in his full stature and proportion. Not a conventional nature and culture need he cumber himself with, nor ask what is the mode in Rome or in Paris; but that house, and weather, and manner of living, which poverty and the fate of birth have made at once so odious and so dear, in the grey unpainted wood cabin on the corner of a New Hampshire farm, or in the log-hut of the backwoods, or in the narrow lodging where he has endured the constraints and seeming of a city poverty—will serve as well as any other condition as the symbol of a thought which pours itself indifferently through all. *Art.*

The Subjects of Art are Always at Hand

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Travel

IT is for want of self-culture that the idol of Travelling, the idol of Italy, of England, of Egypt, remains for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination, did so not by rambling round creation as a moth round a lamp, but by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours we feel that duty is our place, and that the merry-men of circumstance should follow as they may. The soul is no traveller: the wise man stays at home with the soul; and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still, and is not gadding abroad from himself, and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance, that he goes the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign, and not like an interloper or a valet.

I have no churlish objection to the circumnavigation of the globe for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding somewhat

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greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

The Traveler Finds Nothing Abroad That He Does Not Take With Him

Travelling is a fool's paradise. We owe to our first journeys the discovery that place is nothing. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty, and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern Fact, the sad Self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican, and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.

THE secret of success in society is a certain heartiness and sympathy. A man who is not happy in the company, cannot find any word in his memory that will fit the occasion. All his information

Secret of Social Success

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Secret of Social Success

is a little impertinent. A man who is happy there, finds in every turn of the conversation equally lucky occasions for the introduction of that which he has to say. The favourites of society, and what it calls *whole souls*, are able men, and of more spirit than wit, who have no uncomfortable egotism, but who exactly fill the hour and the company, contented and contenting, at a marriage or a funeral, a ball or a jury, a water-party or a shooting-match. *Manners.*

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SPIRITUAL LAWS: SOCIETY

I have no brothers and no peers,
And the dearest interferes;
When I would spend a lonely day,
Sun and moon are in my way.

The Poet.

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THERE is almost no kind of self-reliance, so it be sane and proportioned, which fashion does not occasionally adopt and give it the freedom of its saloons. A sainted soul is always elegant, and, if it will, passes unchallenged into the most guarded ring. But so will Jock the teamster pass, in some crisis that brings him thither, and find favour, as long as his head is not giddy with the new circumstance, and the iron shoes do not wish to dance in waltzes and cotillons. For there is nothing settled in manners, but the laws of behaviour yield to the energy of the individual. The maiden at her first ball, the countryman at a city dinner, believes that there is a ritual according to which every act and compliment must be performed, or the failing party must be cast out of this presence. Later, they learn that good sense makes its own good manners.

Society Keeps Everything in Its Right Place

Once or twice, in real life, we are permitted to enjoy the charm of noble manners, in the presence of a man or woman who have no bar in their nature, but whose

Manners Reflect Character

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character emanates freely in their word and gesture. A beautiful form is better than a beautiful face; a beautiful behaviour is better than a beautiful form: it gives a higher pleasure than statues or pictures; it is the finest of the fine arts. A man is but a little thing in the midst of the objects of nature, yet, by the moral quality radiating from his countenance, he may abolish all considerations of magnitude, and in his manners equal the majesty of the world. I have seen an individual, whose manners, though wholly within the conventions of elegant society, were never learned there, but were original and commanding, and held out protection and prosperity; one who did not need the aid of a court-suit, but carried the holiday in his eye; who exhilarated the fancy by flinging wide the doors of new modes of existence; who shook off the captivity of etiquette, with happy, spirited bearing, good-natured and free as Robin Hood; yet with the port of an emperor,—if need be, calm, serious, and fit to stand the gaze of millions. *Manners.*

Man is Greater Than Objects

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SOCIETY is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs. *Self Reliance.*

Society Rests on Conformity

THE gentleman is a man of truth, lord of his own actions, and expressing that lordship in his behaviour, not in any manner dependent and servile, either on persons, or opinions, or possessions. Beyond this fact of truth and real force, the word denotes good-nature or benevolence: manhood first, and then gentleness. The popular notion certainly adds a condition of ease and fortune. But that is a natural result of personal force and love, that they should possess and dispense the goods of the world. *Manners.*

A Gentleman

ARISTOCRACY and fashion are certain inevitable results. These mutual

Class Distinctions

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selections are indestructible, If they provoke anger in the least favoured class, and the excluded majority revenge themselves on the excluding minority, by the strong hand, and kill them, at once a new class finds itself at the top, as certainly as cream rises in a bowl of milk: and if the people should destroy class after class, until two men only were left, one of these would be the leader, and would be involuntarily served and copied by the other. You may keep this minority out of sight and out of mind, but it is tenacious of life, and is one of the estates of the realm. *Manners.*

Forms

SENSE and character make their own forms every moment, and speak or abstain, take wine or refuse it, stay or go, sit in a chair or sprawl with children on the floor, or stand on their head, or what else soever, in a new and aboriginal way: and that strong will is always in fashion, let who will be unfashionable. All that fashion demands is composure, and self-content.

Manners.

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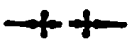
Our Manners Show Our Experience

MANNERS are the revealers of secrets, the betrayers of any disproportion or want of symmetry in mind and character. It is the law of our constitution that every change in our experience instantly indicates itself on our countenance and carriage, as the lapse of time tells itself on the face of a clock. We may be too obtuse to read it, but the record is there. *Social Aims.*



One's Company

A MAN should not go where he cannot carry his whole sphere or society with him—not bodily, the whole circle of his friends, but atmospherically. He should preserve in a new company the same attitude of mind and reality of relation which his daily associates draw to him, else he is shorn of his best beams, and will be an orphan in the merriest club. 'If you could see Vich Ian Vohr with his tail on!——' But Vich Ian Vohr must always carry his belongings in some fashion, if not added as honour, then severed as disgrace.

Manners.

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Behaviour and a Sense of the Beautiful

DEFECT in manners is usually the defect of fine perceptions. Men are too coarsely made for the delicacy of beautiful carriage and customs. It is not quite sufficent to good breeding, a union of kindness and independence. We imperatively require a perception of, and a homage to, beauty in our companions. Other virtues are in request in the field and workyard, but a certain degree of taste is not to be spared in those we sit with. I could better eat with one who did not respect the truth or the laws, than with a sloven and unpresentable person. Moral qualities rule the world, but at short distances, the senses are despotic.

Measures and Proportion

The average spirit of the energetic class is good sense, acting under certain limitations and to certain ends. It entertains every natural gift. Social in its nature, it respects every thing which tends to unite men. It delights in measure. The love of beauty is mainly the love of measure or proportion. The person who screams, or uses the superlative degree, or converses with heat, puts whole drawing-rooms to flight.

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That makes the good and bad of manners, namely, what helps or hinders fellowship. For fashion is not good sense absolute, but relative; not good sense private, but good sense entertaining company. It hates corners and sharp points of character, hates quarrelsome, egotistical, solitary, and gloomy people; hates whatever can interfere with total blending of parties; whilst it values all peculiarities as in the highest degree refreshing, which can consist with good-fellowship. And besides the general infusion of wit to heighten civility, the direct splendour of intellectual power is ever welcome in fine society as the costliest addition to its rule and its credit. *Manners.*

The Reason for Society

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WIT AND HUMOUR.

Of all wit's uses the main one
Is to live well with who has none.

Life.

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WIT makes its own welcome and levels all distinctions. No dignity, no learning, no force of character, can make any stand against good wit. It is like ice, in which no beauty of form, no majesty of carriage can plead any immunity—they must walk gingerly, according to the laws of ice, or down they must go, dignity and all.

The Comic.

Wit No Respecter of Persons

A PERCEPTION of the comic seems to be a balance-wheel in our metaphysical structure. It appears to be an essential element in a fine character. Wherever the intellect is constructive, it will be found. We feel the absence of it as a defect in the noblest and most oracular soul. The perception of the comic is a tie of sympathy with other men, as pledge of sanity, and a protection from those perverse tendencies and gloomy insanities in which fine intellects sometimes lose themselves. A rogue alive to the ludicrous is still convertible. If that sense is lost, his fellowmen can do little for him.

The Comic.

No Nature Complete without Humour

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The Instinct for Play

A TASTE for fun is all but universal in our species, which is the only joker in nature. The rocks, the plants, the beasts, the birds, neither do anything ridiculous, nor betray a perception of anything absurd done in their presence. And as the lower nature does not jest, neither does the highest. The Reason pronounces its omniscient yea and nay, but meddles never with degrees or fractions; and it is in comparing fractions with essential integers or wholes that laughter begins.

The Comic.

Good-Nature is the Soul of Humour

THE perpetual game of humour is to look with considerate good-nature at every object in existence, aloof, as a man might look at a mouse, comparing it with the eternal Whole; enjoying the figure which each self-satisfied particular creature cuts in the unrespecting All, and dismissing it with a benison. Separate any object, as a particular bodily man, a horse, a turnip, a flour-barrel, an umbrella, from the connec-

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tion of things, and contemplate it alone, standing there in absolute nature, it becomes at once comic; no useful, no respectable qualities can rescue it from the ludicrous.

The Comic.

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LITERATURE

That book is good
Which puts me in a working mood.
The Poet.

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THE use of literature is to afford us a platform whence we may command a view of our present life, a purchase by which we may move it. We fill ourselves with ancient learning; install ourselves the best we can in Greek, in Punic, in Roman houses, only that we may wiselier see French, English, and American houses and modes of living.

The use of Literature

Therefore we value the poet. All the argument, and all the wisdom, is not in the encyclopedia, or the treatise on metaphysics, or the Body of Divinity, but in the sonnet or the play. In my daily work I incline to repeat my old steps, and do not believe in remedial force, in the power of change and reform. But some Petrarch or Ariosto, filled with the new wine of his imagination, writes me an ode, or a brisk romance, full of daring thought and action. He smites and arouses me with his shrill tones, breaks up my whole chain of habits, and I open my eye on my own possibilities. He claps wings to the sides of all the solid old lumber of the world, and I am capable

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once more of choosing a straight path in theory and practice. *Circles.*

Poetry is Experience

THE advancing man discovers how deep a property he hath in all literature—in all fable as well as in all history. He finds that the poet was no odd fellow who described strange and impossible situations, but that universal man wrote by his pen a confession true for one and true for all. His own secret biography he finds in lines wonderfully intelligible to him, yet dotted down before he was born. One after another he comes up in his private adventures with every fable of Æsop, of Homer, of Hafiz, of Ariosto, of Chaucer, of Scott, and verifies them with his own head and hands. *History.*

Depth

THE effect of any writing on the public mind is mathematically measurable by its depth of thought. How much water does it draw? If it awaken you to think; if it lift you from your feet with the great

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voice of eloquence; then the effect is to be wide, slow, permanent, over the minds of men; if the pages instruct you not, they will die like flies in the hour. The way to speak and write what shall not go out of fashion, is to speak and write sincerely. All the gilt edges and vellum and morocco, all the presentation-copies to all the libraries, will not preserve a book in circulation beyond its intrinsic date. It must go with all Walpole's Royal and Noble Authors to its fate. Blackmore, Kotzebue, or Pollok, may endure for a night, but Moses and Homer stand forever. There are not in the world at any one time more than a dozen persons who read and understand Plato—never enough to pay for an edition of his works; yet to every generation these come duly down, for the sake of those few persons, as if God brought them in his hand. *Spiritual Laws.*

The Great Books Endure

—+—

THE *test of the poet* is the power to take the passing day, with its news, its cares, its fears, as he shares them and hold

The Poet's Test

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it up to a divine reason, till he sees it to have a purpose and beauty, and to be related to astronomy and history and the eternal order of the world. Then the dry twig blossoms in his hand. He is coalesced and elevated. *Poetry and Imagination.*

History Only Represents the Individual Life

THE world exists for the education of each man. There is no age or state of society, or mode of action in history, to which there is not somewhat corresponding in his life. Every thing tends in a most wonderful manner to abbreviate itself and yield its own virtue to him. He should see that he can live all history in his own person. He must sit at home with might and main, and not suffer himself to be bullied by kings or empires, but know that he is greater than all the geography and all the government of the world; he must transfer the point of view from which history is commonly read, from Rome and Athens and London, to himself, and not deny his conviction that he is the Court, and if England or Egypt have anything to

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say to him, he will try the case; if not, let them forever be silent. *History.*

Debt to the Past

IT is inevitable that you are indebted to the past. You are fed and formed by it. The old forest is decomposed for the composition of the new forest. The old animals have given their bodies to the earth to furnish through chemistry the forming race, and every individual is only a momentary fixation of what was yesterday another's, is to-day his and will belong to a third to-morrow. So it is in thought. Our knowledge is the amassed thought and experience of innumerable minds; our language, our science, our religion, our opinions, our fancies, we inherited. Our country, customs, laws, our ambitions, and our nations of fit and fair—all these we never made; we found them ready-made; we but quote them. *Letters and Social Aims.*

WE are always coming up with the facts that have moved us in history in our private experience, and verifying

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History is Subjective

them here. All history becomes subjective; in other words, there is properly no History; only Biography. Every soul must know the whole lesson for itself—must go over the whole ground. What it does not see, what it does not live, it will not know. What the former age has epitomised into a formula or rule for manipular convenience, it will lose all the good of verifying for itself, by means of the wall of that rule. Somewhere or other, some time or other, it will demand and find compensation for that loss by doing the work itself. Ferguson discovered many things in astronomy which had long been known. The better for him.

History.

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GENIUS

For Genius made his cabin wide
And Love led Gods therein to bide.

The Poet.

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Genius

GENIUS is religious. It is a larger imbibing of the common heart. It is not anomalous, but more like, and not less like, other men. There is in all great poets a wisdom of humanity, which is superior to any talents they exercise. The author, the wit, the partisan, the fine gentleman, does not take place of the man. Humanity shines in Homer, in Chaucer, in Spenser, in Shakspeare, in Milton. They are content with truth. They use the positive degree. The great poet makes us feel our own wealth, and then we think less of his compositions. His greatest communication to our mind is, to teach us to despise all he has done. Shakspeare carries us to such a lofty strain of intelligent activity as to suggest a wealth which beggars his own; and we then feel that the splendid works which he has created, and which in other hours we extol as a sort of self-existent poetry, take no stronger hold of real nature than the shadow of a passing traveller on the rock. *The Over-Soul.*

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The Truth Behind the Book

TALENT alone cannot make a writer. There must be a man behind the book; a personality which, by birth and quality, is pledged to the doctrines there set forth, and which exists to see and state things so, and not otherwise; holding things because they are things. If he cannot rightly express himself to-day, the same things subsist, and will open themselves to-morrow. There lies the burden on his mind—the burden of truth to be declared—more or less understood; and it constitutes his business and calling in the world, to see those facts through, and to make them known.

Representative Men.

Telling the Simple Truth

IN every work of genius we recognise our own rejected thoughts: they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humoured inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else, to-morrow a stranger will say with

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masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another. *History.*

EVERY man, who would do anything well, must come to it from a higher ground. A philosopher must be more than a philosopher. Plato is clothed with the powers of a poet, stands upon the highest place of the poet, and (though I doubt he wanted the decisive gift of lyric expression) mainly is not a poet, because he chose to use the poetic gift to an ulterior purpose. *Representative Men.*

Mastery

BUT *great men*—the word is injurious. Is there caste? is there fate? What becomes of the promise to virtue? The thoughtful youth laments the superfœtation of nature. "Generous and handsome," he says, "is your hero; but look at yonder poor Paddy, whose country is his wheelbarrow; look at his whole nation of Paddies." Why are the masses, from the dawn of

The Cheapness of Men

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history down, food for knives and powder? The idea dignifies a few leaders, who have sentiment, opinion, love, self-devotion; and they make war and death sacred—but what for the wretches whom they hire and kill? The cheapness of man is every day's tragedy. It is as real a loss that others should be low, as that we should be low; for we must have society.

The Glory of the Lowly

Is it a reply to these suggestions, to say, society is a Pestalozzian school; all are teachers and pupils in turn. We are equally served by receiving and by imparting. Men who know the same things, are not long the best company for each other. But bring to each an intelligent person of another experience, and it is as if you let off water from a lake, by cutting a lower basin. It seems a mechanical advantage, and great benefit it is to each speaker, as he can now paint out his thought to himself. We pass very fast, in our personal moods, from dignity to dependence. And if any appear never to assume the chair, but always to stand and serve, it is because we do not see the company in a

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sufficiently long period for the whole rotation of parts to come about. As to what we call the masses, and common men—there are no common men. All men are at last of a size; and true art is only possible, on the conviction that every talent has its apotheosis somewhere. Fair play, and an open field, and freshest laurels to all who have won them! But heaven reserves an equal scope for every creature. Each is uneasy until he has produced his private ray unto the concave sphere, and beheld his talent also in its last nobility and exaltation. *Representative Men.*

Power of a Great Nature

IT is the best sign of a great nature, that it opens a foreground, and, like the breath of morning landscapes, invites us onward. *Representative Men.*

The Poet is Necessary

I KNOW not how it is that we need an interpreter; but the great majority of men seem to be minors, who have not yet come into possession of their own, or mutes,

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who cannot report the conversation they have had with nature. The poet is the man without impediment, who sees and handles that which others dream of, traverses the whole scale of experience, and is representative of man, in virtue of being the largest power to receive and to impart.

The Poet.

The Use of Genius

WHAT is a great man but one of great affinities, who takes up into himself all arts, sciences, all knowables, as his food? He can spare nothing; he can dispose of everything. What is not good for virtue, is good for knowledge. Hence his contemporaries tax him with plagiarism. But the inventor only knows how to borrow; and society is glad to forget the innumerable laborers who ministered to this architect, and reserves all its gratitude for him. When we are praising Plato, it seems we are praising quotations from Solon, and Sophron, and Philolaus. Be it so. Every book is a quotation; and every house is a quotation out of all forests and mines, and stone

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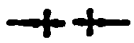
quarries: and every man is a quotation from all his ancestors. And this grasping inventor puts all nations under contribution.

Representative Men.



Liberation

THE ancient British bards had for the title of their order, "Those who are free throughout the world." They are free, and they make free.

There is good reason why we should prize this liberation. The fate of the poor shepherd; who, blinded and lost in the snowstorm, perishes in a drift within a few feet of his cottage-door, is an emblem of the state of man. On the brink of the waters of life and truth, we are miserably dying. The inaccessibleness of every thought but that we are in, is wonderful. What if you come near to it—you are as remote when you are nearest as when you are farthest. Every thought is also a prison; every heaven is also a prison. Therefore we love the poet, the inventor, who in any form, whether in an ode, or in an action, or in looks and behaviour, has yielded us

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a new thought. He unlocks our chains, and admits us to a new scene. *The Poet.*

The Materials for Great Works

EVERY master has found his materials collected, and his power lay in his sympathy with his people, and in his love of the materials he wrought in. What an economy of power! and what a compensation for the shortness of life! All is done to his hand. The world has brought him thus far on his way. The human race has gone out before him, sunk the hills, filled the hollows, and bridged the rivers. Men, nations, poets, artisans, women, all have worked for him, and he enters into their labors. Choose any other thing, out of the line of tendency, out of the national feeling and history, and he would have all to do for himself: his powers would be expended in the first preparations. Great genial power, one would almost say, consists in not being original at all; in being altogether receptive; in letting the world do all, and suffering the spirit of the hour to pass unobstructed through the mind. *Representative Men.*

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SENATES and sovereigns have no compliment, with their medals, swords, and armorial coats, like the addressing to a human being thoughts of a certain height, and presupposing his intelligence. This honour, which is possible in personal intercourse scarcely twice in a lifetime, genius perpetually pays; contented, if now and then, in a century, the proffer is accepted.

Representative Men.

Genius Uplifts

THERE is anything but humiliation in the homage men pay to a great man; it is sympathy, love of the same things, effort to reach them — the expression of their hope of what they shall become when the obstructions of their mal-formation and mal-education shall be trained away. Great men shall not impoverish us, but enrich us. Great men—the age goes on their credit; but all the rest, when their wires are continued, and not cut, can do as signal things, and in new parts of nature. "No angel in his heart acknowledges anyone superior to himself but the Lord alone." *Letters and Social Aims.*

Homage to the Great Uplifts Us

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Make the Earth Wholesome

NATURE seems to exist for the excellent. The world is upheld by the veracity of good men: they make the earth wholesome. They who lived with them found life glad and nutritious. Life is sweet and tolerable only in our belief in such society; and actually, or ideally, we manage to live with superiors.

Representative Men.

Man the Organ of the Soul

WHAT we commonly call man—the eating, drinking, planting, counting man—does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect; but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love. And the blindness of the intellect begins, when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins, when the individual would be something of himself. All reform aims, in some one

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particular, to let the great soul have its way through us; in other words, to engage us to obey. *The Over-Soul.*

MANKIND have, in all ages, attached themselves to a few persons, who, either by the quality of that idea they embodied, or by the largeness of their reception, were entitled to the position of leaders and law-givers. These teach us the qualities of primary nature—admit us to the constitution of things. We swim, day by day, on a river of delusions, and are effectually amused with houses and towns in the air, of which the men about us are dupes. But life is a sincerity. In lucid intervals we say, "Let there be an entrance opened for me into realities; I have worn the fool's cap too long." We will know the meaning of our economies and politics. Give us the cipher, and, if persons and things are scores of a celestial music, let us read off the strains. We have been cheated of our reason; yet there have been sane men, who enjoyed a rich and related exis-

Leaders and Law-Givers

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tence. What they know, they know for us. With each new mind, a new secret of nature transpires; nor can the Bible be closed until the last great man is born. These men correct the delirium of the animal spirits, make us considerate, and engage us to new aims and powers. *Representative Men.*

Innocence

GREAT is the soul, and plain. It is no flatterer, it is no follower; it never appeals from itself. It always believes in itself. Before the immense possibilities of man, all mere experience, all past biography, however spotless and sainted, shrinks away. . . . The soul gives itself alone, original, and pure, to the Lonely, Original, and Pure, who, on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads, and speaks through it. Then is it glad, young, and nimble. It is not wise, but it sees through all things. It is not called religious, but it is innocent. It calls the light its own, and feels that the grass grows and the stone falls by a law inferior to and dependent on its nature. . . . Thus revering the soul, and learning, as the ancient

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said, that "its beauty is immense," man will come to see that the world is the perennial miracle which the soul worketh, and be less astonished at particular wonders; he will learn that there is no profane history; that all history is sacred; that the universe is represented in an atom, in a moment of time. He will weave no longer a spotted life of shreds and patches, but he will live with a divine unity. He will cease from that base and frivolous in his own life, and be content with all places and any service he can render. He will calmly front the morrow in the negligency of that trust which carries God with it, and so hath already the whole future in the bottom of the heart. *The Over-Soul.*

The Soul's Nature

WE do not know to-day whether we are busy or idle. In times, when we thought ourselves indolent, we have afterwards discovered, that much was accomplished, and much was begun in us. All our days are so unprofitable while they pass, that 'tis wonderful where or when we

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Ro-
mance

ever got any thing of this which we call wisdom, poetry, virtue. We never got it on any dated calendar day. Some heavenly days must have been intercalated somewhere, like those that Hermes won with dice of the Moon, that Osiris might be born. It is said, all martyrdoms looked mean when they were suffered. Every ship is a romantic object, except that we sail in. Embark, and the romance quits our vessel, and hangs on every other sail in the horizon. Our life looks trivial, and we shun to record it. Men seem to have learned of the horizon the art of perpetual retreating and reference. "Yonder uplands are rich pasturage, and my neighbour has fertile meadow, but my field," says the querulous farmer, "only holds the world together." *Experience.*

Sim-
plicity

BUT the soul that ascendeth to worship the great God is plain and true; has no rose-colour; no fine friends; no chivalry; no adventures; does not want admiration; dwells in the hour that now is, in the earnest experience of the common day—by reason

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of the present moment and the mere trifle having become porous to thought, and bibulous of the sea of light. *The Over-Soul.*

ALL that respects the individual is temporary and prospective, like the individual himself, who is ascending out of his limits, into a catholic existence. We have never come at the true and best benefit of any genius, so long as we believe him an original force. In the moment when he ceases to help us as a cause, he begins to help us move as an effect. Then he appears as an exponent of a vaster mind and will. The opaque self becomes transparent with the light of the First Cause.

Representative Men.

Genius is Not Cause but Effect

THE soul is the perceiver and revealer of truth. We know truth when we see it, let skeptic and scoffer say what they choose. Foolish people ask you, when you have spoken what they do not wish to hear, "How do you know it is truth, and not an error of your own?" We know truth when

The Revealer

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we see it, from opinion, as we know when we are awake that we are awake. It was a grand sentence of Emanuel Swedenborg, which would alone indicate the greatness of that man's perception—"It is no proof of a man's understanding to be able to affirm whatever he pleases; but to be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false, this is the mark and character of intelligence." *The Over-Soul.*

Truth

WE distinguish the announcements of the soul, its manifestations of its own nature, by the term *Revelation.* These are always attended by the emotion of the sublime. For this communication is an influx of the Divine mind into our mind. It is an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life. Every distinct apprehension of this central commandment agitates men with awe and delight. A thrill passes through all men at the reception of new truth, or at the performance of a great action, which comes out of the heart of nature. *The Over-Soul.*

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Spiritual Riches

IT is long ere we discover how rich we are. Our history, we are sure, is quite tame. We have nothing to write, nothing to infer. But our wiser years still run back to the despised recollections of childhood, and always we are fishing up some wonderful article out of that pond; until, by and by, we begin to suspect that the biography of the one foolish person we know is, in reality, nothing less than the miniature paraphrase of the hundred volumes of the Universal History. *Intellect.*

Vision

A CERTAIN tendency to insanity has always attended the opening of the religious sense in men, as if "blasted with excess of light." The trances of Socrates; the "union" of Plotinus; the vision of Porphyry; the conversion of Paul; the aurora of Behmen; the convulsions of George Fox and his Quakers; the illumination of Swedenborg; are of this kind. What was in the case of these remarkable persons a ravishment has in innumerable instances in common life been exhibited in less striking manner. Every-

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where the history of religion betrays a tendency to enthusiasm. The rapture of the Moravian and Quietist; the opening of the internal sense of the Word, in the language of the New Jerusalem Church; the revival of the Calvinistic Churches; the experiences of the Methodists—are varying forms of that shudder of awe and delight with which the individual soul always mingles with the universal soul.

The nature of these revelations is always the same. They are perceptions of the absolute law: they are solutions of the soul's own questions. They do not answer the questions which the understanding asks. The soul answers never by words, but by the thing itself that is inquired after.

Spiritual Reports

Revelation is the disclosure of the soul. The popular notion of a revelation is, that it is a telling of fortunes. In past oracles of the soul, the understanding seeks to find answers to sensual questions, and undertakes to tell from God how long men shall exist, what their hands shall do, and who shall be their company, adding even names,

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and dates and places. But we must pick no locks. We must check this low curiosity. An answer in words is delusive; it is really no answer to the questions you ask. Do not ask a description of the countries towards which you sail. The description does not describe them to you; and to-morrow you arrive there, and know them by inhabiting them. Men ask of the immortality of the soul, and the employments of heaven, and the state of the sinner, and so forth. They even dream that Jesus has left replies to precisely these interrogatories. Never a moment did that sublime spirit speak in their *patois*. *The Over-Soul.*

The Soul Gives Value

I LEARN the wisdom of St. Bernard: "Nothing can work me damage except myself; the harm that I sustain, I carry about with me, and never am a real sufferer but by my own fault."

But all the good of nature is the soul's, and may be had, if paid for in nature's lawful coin, that is, by labour, which the heart and the head allow. I no longer wish to meet a

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Love Levels Inequalities

good I do not earn—for example, to find a pot of buried gold—knowing that it brings with it new responsibility. I do not wish more external goods — neither possessions, nor honours, nor powers, nor persons. The gain is apparent, the tax is certain. . . . Look at those who have less faculty, and one feels sad, and knows not well what to make of it. Almost he shuns their eye; almost he fears they will upbraid God. What should they do? It seems a great injustice. But face the facts, and see them nearly, and these mountainous inequalities vanish. Love reduces them all, as the sun melts the iceberg in the sea. The heart and soul of all men being one, this bitterness of *His* and *Mine* ceases. His is mine. I am my brother, and my brother is me. If I feel overshadowed and outdone by great neighbours, I can yet love; I can still receive; and he that loveth maketh his own the grandeur he loves. Thereby I make the discovery that my brother is my guardian, acting for me with the friendliest designs, and the estate I so admired and

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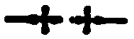
envied is my own. It is the eternal nature of the soul to appropriate and make all things its own. *Compensation.*



Memory Ennobles Experience

WHEN the act of reflection takes place in the mind, when we look at ourselves in the light of thought, we discover that our life is embosomed in beauty. Behind us, as we go, all things assume pleasing forms, as clouds do far off. Not only things familiar and stale, but even the tragic and terrible are comely, as they take their place in the pictures of memory. The river-bank, the weed at the water-side, the old house, the foolish person—however neglected in the passing—have a grace in the past. Even the corpse that has lain in the chambers has added a solemn ornament to the house. The soul will not know either deformity or pain. If in the hours of clear reason we should speak the severest truth, we should say, that we had never made a sacrifice. *Spiritual Laws.*

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